



**COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION FOR DIETETICS EDUCATION**  
**AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION**  
**FOUNDATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY-LEVEL DIETITIANS**

Individuals interested in becoming Registered Dietitians should expect to study a wide variety of topics focusing on food, nutrition, and management. These areas are supported by the sciences: biological, physiological, behavioral, social, and communication. Becoming a dietitian involves a combination of academic preparation, including a minimum of a baccalaureate degree, and a supervised practice component.

The following foundation knowledge and skill requirements are listed in the eight areas that students will focus on in the academic component of a dietetics program. Foundation learning includes knowledge of a topic as it applies to the profession of dietetics, and the ability to demonstrate the skill at a level that can be developed further. To successfully achieve the foundation knowledge and skills, graduates must demonstrate the ability to communicate and collaborate, solve problems, and apply critical thinking skills.

These requirements may be met through separate courses, combined into one course, or as part of several courses as determined by the college or university sponsoring a program accredited or approved by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) of the American Dietetic Association.

**FOUNDATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

<b>CONTENT AREA</b>	<b><i>Knowledge of</i></b>	<b><i>Demonstrated Ability to</i></b>
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>	negotiation techniques, lay and technical writing, media presentations, interpersonal communication skills, counseling theory and methods, interviewing techniques, educational theory and techniques, concepts of human and group dynamics, public speaking, educational materials development	use oral and written communications in presenting an educational session for a group, counsel individuals on nutrition, document appropriately a variety of activities, explain a public policy position regarding dietetics, use current information technologies, work effectively as a team member
<b>PHYSICAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES</b>	exercise physiology; genetics; general health assessment, eg, blood pressure and vital signs; organic chemistry; biochemistry; physiology; microbiology; nutrient metabolism; pathophysiology related to nutrition care; fluid and electrolyte requirements; pharmacology: nutrient-nutrient and drug-nutrient interaction	interpret medical terminology, interpret laboratory parameters relating to nutrition, apply microbiological and chemical considerations to process controls
<b>SOCIAL SCIENCES</b>	public policy development, psychology, health behaviors and educational needs of diverse populations, economics and nutrition	
<b>RESEARCH</b>	research methodologies, needs assessments, outcomes-based research, scientific method, quality improvement methods	interpret current research, interpret basic statistics

**FOUNDATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

<b>CONTENT AREA</b>	<i>Knowledge of</i>	<i>Demonstrated Ability to</i>
<b>FOOD</b>	food technology; biotechnology; culinary techniques; sociocultural and ethnic food consumption issues and trends; food safety and sanitation; food delivery systems; food and non-food procurement; availability of food and nutrition programs in the community, local, state, and national food security policy; food production systems; environmental issues related to food; role of food in promotion of a healthy lifestyle; promotion of pleasurable eating; food and nutrition laws/regulations/policies; food availability and access for the individual, family, and community; applied sensory evaluation of food	calculate and interpret nutrient composition of foods, determine recipe/formula proportions and modifications for volume food production, apply food science knowledge to functions of ingredients in food, demonstrate basic food preparation and presentation skills, modify recipe/formula for individual or group dietary needs
<b>NUTRITION</b>	evolving methods of assessing health status; influence of age, growth, and normal development on nutritional requirements; nutrition and metabolism; assessment and treatment of nutritional health risks; medical nutrition therapy; strategies to assess need for adaptive feeding techniques and equipment; health promotion and disease prevention theories and guidelines; influence of socioeconomic, cultural, and psychological factors on food and nutrition behavior; complementary and alternative nutrition and herbal therapies; dietary supplements	calculate and/or define diets for health conditions addressed by health promotion/disease prevention activities or uncomplicated instances of chronic diseases of the general population, eg, hypertension, obesity, diabetes, diverticular disease; screen individuals for nutritional risk; collect pertinent information for comprehensive nutrition assessments; determine nutrient requirements across the lifespan; translate nutrition needs into food choices and menus for people of diverse cultures and religions; measure, calculate, and interpret body composition data; calculate enteral and parenteral nutrition formulations
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	program planning, monitoring, and evaluation; strategic management; facility management; organizational change theory; risk management; management theories; human resource management, including labor relations; materials management; financial management, including accounting principles; quality improvement; information management; systems theory; marketing theory and techniques; diversity issues	determine costs of services/operation, prepare a budget, interpret financial data, apply marketing principles, develop a personal portfolio
<b>HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS</b>	health care policy and administration; health care delivery systems; current reimbursement issues, policies, and regulations	

Individuals are expected to develop competence to practice dietetics through a supervised practice component in programs accredited or approved by CADE. Competency statements specify what every dietitian should be able to do at the beginning of his or her practice career. The core competency statements build on appropriate knowledge and skills necessary for the entry-level practitioner to perform reliably at the level indicated. One or more of the emphasis areas are added to the core competencies so that a supervised practice program can prepare graduates for identified market needs. Thus, all entry-level dietitians will have the core competencies and additional competencies according to the emphasis area(s) completed.

## **CORE COMPETENCIES FOR ENTRY-LEVEL DIETITIANS**

1. Perform ethically in accordance with the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics
2. Refer clients/patients to other dietetics professionals or disciplines when a situation is beyond one's level or area of competence
3. Participate in professional activities
4. Perform self-assessment, prepare a portfolio for professional development, and participate in lifelong learning activities
5. Participate in legislative and public policy processes as they affect food, food security, nutrition, and health care
6. Use current technologies for information and communication activities
7. Supervise documentation of nutrition assessment and interventions
8. Provide dietetics education in supervised practice settings
9. Supervise counseling, education, and/or other interventions in health promotion/disease prevention for patients/clients needing medical nutrition therapy for uncomplicated instances of common conditions, eg, hypertension, obesity, diabetes, and diverticular disease
10. Supervise education and training for target groups
11. Develop and review educational materials for target populations
12. Participate in the use of mass media to promote food and nutrition
13. Interpret and incorporate new scientific knowledge into practice
14. Supervise quality improvement, including systems and customer satisfaction, for dietetics service and/or practice
15. Develop and measure outcomes for food and nutrition services and practice
16. Participate in organizational change and planning and in goal-setting processes
17. Participate in business or operating plan development
18. Supervise the collection and processing of financial data
19. Perform marketing functions
20. Participate in human resources functions
21. Participate in facility management, including equipment selection and design/redesign of work units
22. Supervise the integration of financial, human, physical, and material resources and services

23. Supervise production of food that meets nutrition guidelines, cost parameters, and consumer acceptance
24. Supervise development and/or modification of recipes/formulas
25. Supervise translation of nutrition into foods/menus for target populations
26. Supervise design of menus as indicated by the patient's/client's health status
27. Participate in applied sensory evaluation of food and nutrition products
28. Supervise procurement, distribution, and service within delivery systems
29. Manage safety and sanitation issues related to food and nutrition
30. Supervise nutrition screening of individual patients/clients
31. Supervise nutrition assessment of individual patients/clients with uncomplicated instances of common medical conditions, eg, hypertension, obesity, diabetes, diverticular disease
32. Assess nutritional status of individual patients/clients with complex medical conditions, ie, more complicated health conditions in select populations, eg, renal disease, multi-system organ failure, trauma
33. Design and implement nutrition care plans as indicated by the patient's/client's health status
34. Manage monitoring of patients'/clients' food and/or nutrient intake
35. Select, implement, and evaluate standard enteral and parenteral nutrition regimens, ie, in a medically stable patient to meet nutritional requirements where recommendations/adjustments involve primarily macronutrients
36. Develop and implement transitional feeding plans, ie, conversion from one form of nutrition support to another, eg, total parenteral nutrition to tube feeding to oral diet
37. Coordinate and modify nutrition care activities among caregivers
38. Conduct nutrition care component of interdisciplinary team conferences to discuss patient/client treatment and discharge planning
39. Refer patients/clients to appropriate community services for general health and nutrition needs and to other primary care providers as appropriate
40. Supervise screening of the nutritional status of the population and/or community groups
41. Conduct assessment of the nutritional status of the population and/or community groups
42. Provide nutrition care for people of diverse cultures and religions across the lifespan, ie, infants through geriatrics
43. Conduct community-based health promotion/disease prevention programs
44. Participate in development and evaluation of a community-based food and nutrition program
45. Supervise community-based food and nutrition programs
46. Participate in coding and billing of dietetics/nutrition services to obtain reimbursement for services from public or private insurers

## COMPETENCY STATEMENTS FOR EMPHASIS AREAS

All dietitian education supervised practice programs must offer at least one emphasis area. The emphasis areas are not intended to prepare specialists or advanced level practitioners as defined for credentialing purposes. Competencies for each emphasis area build on the core competencies and are designed to begin to develop the *depth* necessary for future proficiency in that area of dietetics practice. More experience in at least one area provides a model for learning throughout one's professional life.

For establishing an emphasis area, the program has the following options:

- Use one or more of the four defined emphasis areas; or,
- Develop a general emphasis by selecting a minimum of seven competency statements, relevant to program mission and goals, with at least one from each of the four defined emphasis areas. The selected competencies should build on the core competencies. General emphasis does not mean achievement of all competencies from all emphasis areas; or,
- Create a unique emphasis area with a minimum of seven competency statements, based on environmental resources and identified needs.

### Nutrition Therapy Emphasis Competencies

1. Supervise nutrition assessment of individual patients/clients with complex medical conditions, ie, more complicated health conditions in select populations, eg, renal disease, multi-system organ failure, trauma
2. Integrate pathophysiology into medical nutrition therapy recommendations
3. Supervise design through evaluation of nutrition care plan for patients/clients with complex medical conditions, ie, more complicated health conditions in select populations, eg, those with renal disease, multi-system organ failure, trauma
4. Select, monitor, and evaluate complex enteral and parenteral nutrition regimens, ie, more complicated health conditions in select populations, eg, in patients with renal disease, multi-system organ failure, trauma
5. Supervise development and implementation of transition feeding plans from the inpatient to home setting
6. Conduct counseling and education for patients/clients with complex needs, ie, more complicated health conditions in select populations, eg, those with renal disease, multi-system organ failure, trauma
7. Perform basic physical assessment
8. Participate in nasoenteric feeding tube placement and care
9. Participate in waived point-of-care testing, such as blood glucose monitoring
10. Participate in the care of patients/clients requiring adaptive feeding devices
11. Manage clinical nutrition services

### **Community Emphasis Competencies**

1. Manage nutrition care for diverse population groups across the lifespan
2. Conduct outcome assessment/evaluation of a community-based food and nutrition program
3. Develop community-based food and nutrition programs
4. Participate in nutrition surveillance and monitoring of communities
5. Participate in community-based research
6. Participate in food and nutrition policy development and evaluation based on community needs and resources
7. Consult with organizations regarding food access for target populations
8. Develop a health promotion/disease prevention intervention project
9. Participate in waived point-of-care testing, such as hematocrit and cholesterol levels
10. Conduct general health assessment, eg, blood pressure and vital signs

### **Foodservice Systems Management Emphasis Competencies**

1. Manage development and/or modification of recipes/formulas
2. Manage menu development for target populations
3. Manage applied sensory evaluation of food and nutrition products
4. Manage production of food that meets nutrition guidelines, cost parameters, and consumer acceptance
5. Manage procurement, distribution, and service within delivery systems
6. Manage the integration of financial, human, physical, and material resources
7. Supervise customer satisfaction systems for dietetics services and/or practice
8. Supervise marketing functions
9. Supervise human resource functions
10. Perform operations analysis

### **Business/Entrepreneur Emphasis Competencies**

1. Perform organizational and strategic planning
2. Develop business or operating plan
3. Supervise procurement of resources
4. Manage the integration of financial, human, physical, and material resources
5. Supervise organizational change process
6. Supervise coordination of services
7. Supervise marketing functions

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## Resources

### Web Site

The ADA/CADE Web site includes a listing with selected information on each CADE-accredited Coordinated and Internship Program, and each CADE-approved or accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics and Dietetic Technician Program. Although CADE does not accredit graduate level programs in nutrition or dietetics unless they meet entry-level academic requirements, a listing of graduate programs beyond entry-level in nutrition and dietetics-related areas also is included on the Web site. The URL is <http://www.eatright.org/cade>.

**For More Information Contact:** ADA Accreditation, Education Programs, and Student Operations  
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